

SUBJECT: A report and recommendation on a petition to dissolve the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission (HCRPC) and transfer all HCRPC functions and duties to a new County planning commission.

BACKGROUND:

Community planning structure and practice has changed dramatically since HCRPC's establishment 77 years ago when it was one of a few planning organizations in the county. Today, in addition to HCRPC there are 37 municipal planning commissions and planning and zoning boards in most of the 12 townships. Hamilton County's planning structure must be reinvented to better respond to the current and future needs of the County.

The Hamilton County Commissioners support converting the planning commission from a regional form to a county form. Some of the reasons provided for converting to the county planning commission form are as followings:

1. The proposed county planning commission structure is a better fit for the current funding of the planning commission. In 2005, the Board of County Commissioners provided 94% of HCRPC funding. When the regional planning commission was initially established, local governments equally contributed to the commission's appropriations.
2. The proposed county planning commission structure eliminates current inequities in local fees and services. HCRPC's services are provided to each of Hamilton County's 49 local governments even though annual fees for local governments to be members are voluntary. In 2005, 55% of the 49 jurisdictions elected not to pay the annual fee.
3. Implementation of Hamilton County's 2030 Plan requires greater alignment of Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) goals, planning initiatives and other county department work programs. The proposed county planning commission structure facilitates this desired alignment and collaboration since the planning department will report directly to the County Administrator, just like other county departments.
4. Eliminating state audits will result in biannual savings of at least \$14,000 in addition to annual savings related to the staff time required for audit preparation.
5. Greater productivity of planning staff will be possible by eliminating the need for time spent annually on administrative tasks related to coordinating membership, recruitment, marketing, fee schedules, invoices, and collection necessary to sustain regional planning commission membership.
6. Planning Partnership, the long range planning committee, will be structured as a more inclusive action oriented alliance of all planning commissions.
7. The proposed county planning commission structures enables greater potential for future consideration of a joint city/county planning commission to address the interconnected problems and opportunities of our urban core and urban county.
8. The three County Commissioners or their appointed alternatives will serve on the County Planning Commission thereby increasing their awareness of, and participation in, planning commission initiatives.

The Ohio Revised Code §713.22 provides that a board of county commissioners or a county may, and on petition of the planning commissions of a majority of the municipal corporations in the county having those planning commissions shall, provide for the organization and maintenance of a county planning commission.

RECOMMENDATION:

The staff of the Department of Community Development and Planning recommends that City Planning Commission take the following action:

Approve the attached Resolution to petition the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners to organize and maintain a county planning commission;

Approve the transfer of all functions, powers and duties of the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission to the Hamilton County Planning Commission on the effective date of establishment of the Hamilton County Planning Commission;

Approve the dissolution of the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission on the effective date of the Hamilton County Planning Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret A. Wuerstle, AICP
Chief City Planner